

Pupil Transportation

The Pupil Transportation Section ensures that school children throughout the state are transported safely to and from school. Currently, there are approximately 8,230 school buses in operation in the State of Tennessee. This section is responsible for overseeing all school bus inspections in the state and determining whether or not public school bus systems are in compliance with the safety requirements set forth in the Tennessee Code. Pupil Transportation duties are accomplished through five primary areas: Bus Driver Training, Bus Inspection, Records Administration, Child Care Vehicle Inspection, and Child Care Driver Training.

Bus Driver Training

Each year, the Pupil Transportation Section provides mandatory four-hour school bus driver training sessions to all individuals who have a school bus driver license endorsement. Following each training session, a test is given to all attendees. The results are maintained and distributed by this section. Certificate of Training Awards are completed, as proof of attendance, and sent to each system as the drivers complete the training. Downgrades are conducted whereby the school bus endorsement is removed from a driver license for failure to attend a training session. During FY 2004-2005, 1,675 school bus drivers were downgraded. Downgrade information is forwarded to the Transportation Director for the county or school system in which the school bus driver employed.

School Bus Drivers Trained FY 2004-2005

East Region	3,169
Middle Region	4,560
West Region	3,423
Total	11,152

Bus Inspection

School buses may receive two different types of inspections annually. School bus inspectors conduct annual and follow-up inspections on school buses in all school systems throughout the state during the school year (August through May). Extended utilization inspections are conducted during the summer months on buses at least 12 years old until they reach 15 years of age. At this time, they must be removed from service. Spot checks are conducted at the end of the school year before the extended utilization inspections begin. These inspections are conducted randomly to ensure that buses are being properly maintained.

Complimentary inspections are conducted upon request from Headstart agencies, private schools, and churches. These inspections are worked into the inspectors' schedules, as time permits.

During the 2004-2005 school year, school bus inspections were conducted in 137 systems statewide. (This does not include complimentary inspections.) As a result of these inspections, approximately 1,600 buses were placed out-of-service. Ninety-nine percent (99%) of those buses that were placed out of service were re-inspected within 30 days and cleared for safe operation.

School Bus Inspections FY 2004-2005

Class	East Region	Middle Region	West Region	Total
#1 – Annual Inspection	3,440	3,502	3,399	10,341
#2 – Extended Utilization	366	349	382	1,097
#3 – Spot Inspection	44	40	44	128
#4 – Comp. Inspections	19	20	18	57
Total	3,869	3,911	3,843	11,623

Child Care Vehicle Inspections

Beginning January 1, 2004, our division became responsible for the inspection of child care vehicles. These vehicles range from 15 passenger vans to motor coaches. During FY 2004–2005, approximately 750 child care vehicle inspections were completed.

Child Care Driver Training

Beginning January 1, 2004, our division also became responsible for providing in-service training for child care vehicle drivers. During FY 2004–2005, approximately 1,180 child care drivers completed training.

Records Administration

Maintaining accurate files relating to school bus activity has helped keep crashes involving school buses in Tennessee to a minimum. The Pupil Transportation section serves as a repository for incidents involving school buses, school bus systems, and school bus drivers.

Annually, Moving Violation Reports indicating individuals with school bus endorsements whose licenses have been revoked, suspended, or canceled, are sent to school superintendents with a letter advising them that drivers should not drive a bus until they have followed proper procedures to have the violation reconciled with the Department of Safety. Warning letters are sent to drivers for which Motorist Violation Reports (passing stopped school bus) are received. Files are maintained on all school bus inspections that have been conducted (annual, follow-up, extended utilization, complimentary). Files are also kept on all reported school bus crashes.

